

Spot Checking
 Food ★ Fun ★ Frolic
 By Bill Whitman



Fine Trios at International

Not only does the International Hotel feature two of the finest and most danceable trios in the area, they also boast some of the finest food available in Los Angeles.

Down stairs in the Trophy Lounge, adjacent to the beautiful Hunt Room, you'll find the Rick Michaels Trio for your entertainment and up at the top of the hotel in the Penthouse Lounge the Dave Howard Trio holds forth for your dancing enjoyment. Both toe tappers.

Enjoyed some excellent lobster thermidor in the Penthouse Restaurant last Saturday night that left nothing to be desired. And it wasn't just the quality of the cuisine that struck home; it was also the quality of the service we enjoyed. Captain "Scotty" as well as the waiters and the sharp little mini-skirted lassies over in the lounge. Gals like blondkin "Sandy" for instance. All superb.

True, it's not the cheapest spot in town to dine but don't look down your nose at prices. It's the old story — you pay your money and you, etc., etc. The International Hotel is strictly class although Saturday night the fog didn't recognize the class.

we all exuded. Could see the window, though!

Meanwhile, down there on La Cienega at Centinela at the Jet Room Lounge, Bill Fulkerson's still pulling 'em in with his excellent piano noodling night.

Here's a guy you'll enjoy if you've never heard him and even more so if you have heard him. Plays all those good old sing-along tunes for the customers. Doesn't miss a chance to turn in one of his own special numbers, either. Like when the requests take a short lull.

Owner-operator-host Nick Ciacirelli, by the way, must have been the first one on his block to be all decked out for Christmas. At least it was the first "malt shoppe" we'd visited that had the decorations strung up so early. Now don't forget, this was a week or so ago that we noticed it. Now there are several more dolled up.

Anyway, if you're pleasure-bent, get on down there for some real great fun at the giant piano bar in the Jet Room.

A little out of the immediate territory now but let's take a

swing down Laguna Beach way for a moment. It's Ben Brown's Restaurant.

As general manager Roy Moss says, "Banquets are big business" but surely Roy hasn't got a corner on that belief. Especially in this business.

Anyway, due to this thought, this new and beautiful Ben Brown Restaurant at the Laguna Beach Country Club in South Laguna has opened two huge banquet rooms for the express purpose of handling the hordes of people that have been clamoring for space in which to hold their holiday get-togethers.

One of these rooms can take care of more than 200 people at one time while the other holds some 150. In addition to this, Moss has set aside five smartly appointed conference and meeting rooms for your needs.

All these rooms provide complete facilities for your meetings including sound systems, chalk boards, special menus for breakfast, lunch and dinner — and all reasonable prices.

Then for recreational activity, you can't beat their golf course. Of course at this time of year one doesn't think about swimming too much but in the nicer weather it's just a short five minute walk to the beautiful sandy beach of the blue Pacific.

Why not put this one on your "next" list, but call the Ben Brown Restaurant and Motor Hotel first and make some arrangements. The number is (714) 499-2663. Might even take a drive some weekend soon and go visit these excellent facilities.

That new addition that manager Jim Lyons has introduced at the Harborlight Restaurant in San Pedro looks like a winner. In fact there are two new additions.

For \$3.25 you'd be hard put to beat those steak sandwiches or the prime rib sandwiches. They're obviously a hit with the

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SPANISH FLAVOR . . . And this does capture the Spanish flavor of the country for which it was named. The Iberian Room opened recently at Lococo's Restaurant in Manhattan Beach.

diners due to the tremendous demand.

Here's an invitation you can't pass up! Not if you're the gourmet type 'cause John Gregory has a thing for you down there at the Torrance Ramada Inn.

Works like this. Each Sunday night at 9 p.m., John will select and announce the name of his "dinner for two" guest of the week from among those patrons who have filled out a special card presented to them by their waitress. Oh, and if the person isn't present at the time, the invitation will be mailed to his home.

You're sure to enjoy one of Mr. Gregory's fine flaming dinners. We sat down to one of his sumptuous repasts last Wednesday night and it was a delight to watch "a man at work." A true artist is John Gregory when he flames your dinner right at your table and he makes it look so easy. And the taste is out of this world.

So if you happen to be a guest in the dining room, cocktail lounge or coffee shop any time and the waitress hands you one of the special cards, by all means fill it out and turn it in. You'll enjoy it thoroughly if you happen to become the lucky winner.

Then after your dinner, stick around for some solid dancing and listening while The Marshmellows — Phil, Frank and Eileen — regale you from the band stand. An exciting and highly entertaining group, not to mention danceable.

You've undoubtedly heard of Rouvaun, the pop-opera singer. Well, now you can see him and hear him at Melodyland Theatre come Dec. 21. It's to be a one-night stand, though so hurry.

Rouvaun is the star of the successful Casino de Paris Show in Las Vegas, you know and will share billing with comic Sammy Shore.

If you think you're hearing a lot of new sounds coming from the Tea House these nights, you're right.

The president of the Polynesian Society, for instance, Joe



B, B and T . . . That means blonde, beautiful and talented and she's Grete Borgen, former Norwegian National skating champion who will appear at the Forum with the 1969 edition of Holiday On Ice, Jan. 2 through 12.

Keawa has been in several times lending his fine tones with some excellent Hawaiian tunes accompanied by Teharu and the Young Polynesians. Also Kaleo Makaena has rendered some delightful numbers.

And there are few in the Torrance area who don't know that quality singer of songs, Junior Kalima. Then one of the big hits lately was when "Chico" burst into song with "Here's to Happiness." Put the crowd away, he did!

So that gives you the rough of the "happening" going on at Rose and Louie Song's Tea House these chilly evenings. Get's warm inside, though, you can bet!

Now you may think there's a lot of bull in this column from time to time but take it from here, this item is no bull.

They've got some swinging things over at the Bashful Bull on West Carson Street. Goodies like that Monday night special, for instance—T-bone steak with potatoes and French bread for 99 cents. That's what for instance!

Or maybe you go for the weekend special. That's the New York steak for \$1.39 all weekend featuring color TV for you sporting event buffs.

Then while waiting for Jack the other day, happened to be

reading their menu on the wall which is a real gas. Like half a pound of ground round for 89 cents. Or the T-bone or top sirloin at \$1.29 plus the New York cut for \$1.59.

And if you want to go really gung-ho tie into one of those Diamond Jim New York steaks at \$1.99. Then they follow the whole ball of wax up with the line that kids portions go off at half price. How's that grab you!

Anyhoo, they've got two addresses for you. One's at 1077 W. Carson St. and the other's at 8330 Alondra Blvd. in Paramount.

Just had a quick random thought here but understand Mike Pucci left brother Len all by his onesies to run their Wall Street West Restaurant some time here a week or so ago. He took off for Las Vegas.

Must remember to ask him, if he won, lost or drew. But then, who wins in Vegas? Certainly not this department!

Where are you spending your holidays? Well if you're staying in Torrance and were wondering where the Hawaiian Leprechaun is playing, you'll find him hanging tough down at Hop Louie's Latitude 29, 3901 Pacific Coast Hwy.

Also in case you don't remember who the Hawaiian Lepre-

chaun is, it's Ernie Menehune, the golden voice of the Islands. Along with Ernie is his complete Hawaiian revue including such nicies as lovely Tahina plus the Waikiki Twins to regale you with their nip-rolling charm. Very talented dancers, these.

Then up at Hop's other spot, The Trade Winds at Wagon Wheel Junction in Oxnard it's The Sons of the Pioneers.

This fine group of radio and television fame will remain here through Dec. 22. Following The Sons' it'll be Martin Denny through the holidays.

Hop reminds all you pleasure seeking buffs to be sure and make your New Year's Eve reservations as early as you possibly can and avoid that last minute rush.

Here's a little something along the advance line. It's the Holiday On Ice with their all-new edition of the World's Most Famous Ice Spectacular.

This extravaganza opens at the Fabulous Forum Thursday, Jan. 2, and will play through Sunday, the 12th. That makes just nine evening performances and eight matinees.

Prices for this show start at \$2.50, then \$3, \$3.50, \$4, and \$5. And for those under 16 it's half price for Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings and on Saturday, the 4th at one in the afternoon and again at five.

Tickets are available at the Forum boxoffice, Southern California Music, all Mutual Agencies, Wallich's Music City stores, Buffum's in Long Beach, La Habra, Newport Beach and Lakewood, so like get on the ball and buy your tickets for this event.

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